

THE
Light Unchangeable:

29

AND
Truth and Good Order, justified
against Error and Disorder.

BEING
A Narrative of the Proceedings in the Meetings of some
great Professors in Religion, in this County, who
pretend more to Truth, Justice, and Righteousness,
than others.

WITH
A Vindication of the Scriptures from their private Interpretation,
and likewise my self from Calumnies; with a Word of
Caution.

AND
Their setting up Womens Meetings, under no less Censures, than
Excommunication against such who shall either by Word or
Deed discountenance the same; with some sober Questions to
them concerning it; their Answer and Reply.

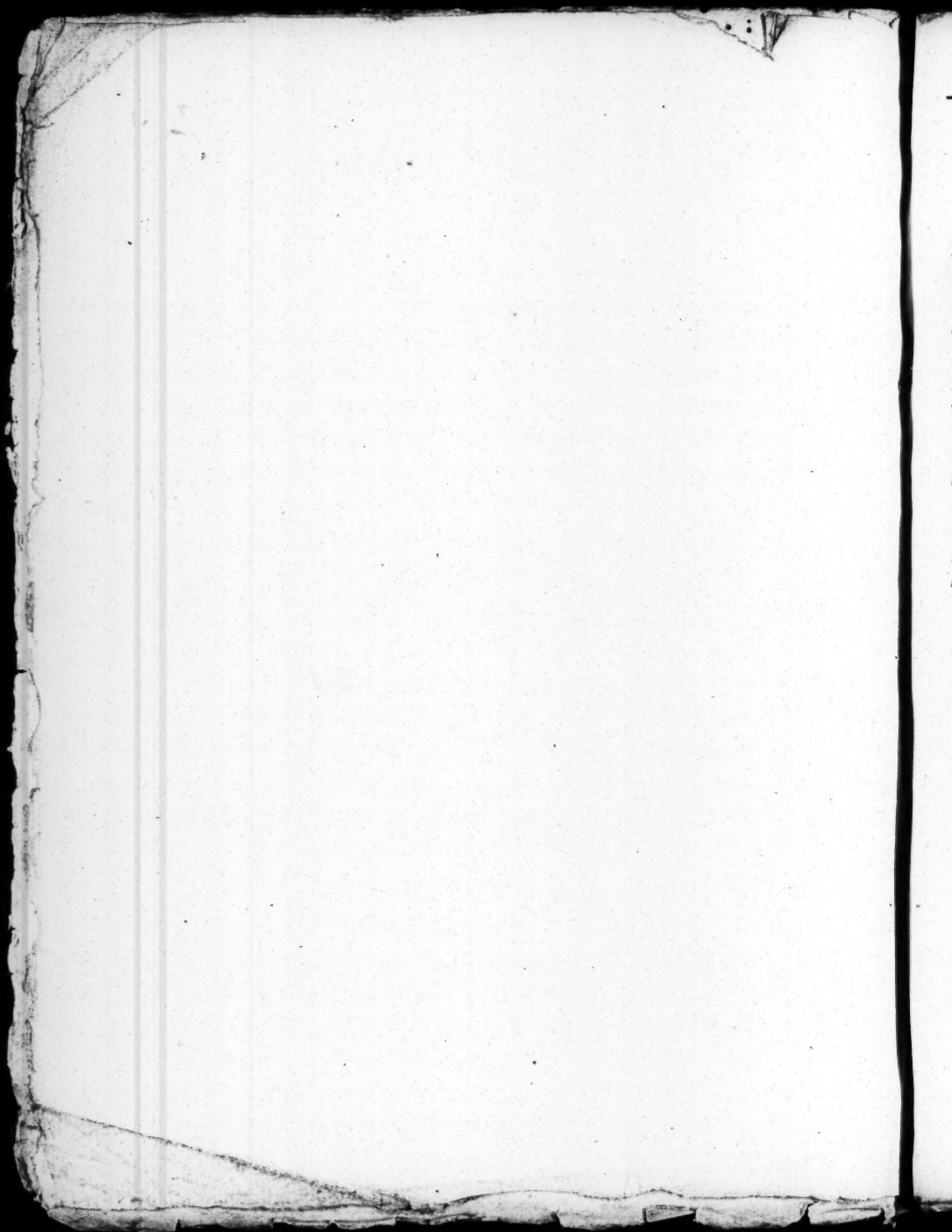
By *Richard Smith*, Chirurgion in *Chester*,

Prov. 21 3. *To do Justice and Judgment, is more acceptable to
the Lord than Sacrifice.*

Isa. 58 1. *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a Trumpet,
and shew my People their Transgression, and the House of Ja-
cob their Sins.*

Jer. 13. 17. *But if ye will not hear it, my Soul shall weep in se-
cret Places for your Pride, and my Eye shall weep sore, and
run down with tears, because (some of) the Lords Flock is
carried away Captive.*

LONDON, Printed in the Year 1677.





Impartial and Unprejudiced Reader.

IT is the common Saying of all, of all Sorts of People, professing Religion, they have Truth on their side; and who have so are truly happy. I having walked with such a People in these Parts, since they were so, and kept Meetings in my House, till of late Disorders there increasing beyond what was fit to be born, expected my Friends, who should and ought to have taken a more godly care, to have resisted the same; on the neglect of which I desired that Meeting in my House to be removed. Differences then grew betwixt them and me to that height, that I told some of them, that let them chuse one, two, or three Friends in the Nation, who might have a discerning into the matter, I would give them the Meeting, that so they might be Judges in the Case; this Motion they refused, but were willing to give me the Meeting, which I was not unwilling to do; but as I foresaw, so it proved fruitless. A Necessity is upon me to give satisfaction to the Moderate, who are inquiring into the same, which I have here done in vindication of Truth, so far as the Lord hath made of it known to me, without Singularity or Design. The Intent of publishing the same I signified to my Friends concerned herein, and that they might have seen it before, I gave them ten days time for that end, none of them living so far off me, but they might have come in a day; my intent for so doing was that my Friends might have seen that I had not wronged them in the Narration; so that I have endeavoured to take away all just Occasion from them. But they carried in this as in other things, none came; so that I can appeal to that of God in all Consciences, whether I have not carried Christian and Friend-like towards them, being one never given to Surmisings, Whisperings, clandestinous or unhandson Ways.

And for such who are Partial and Prejudiced, I desire that may be removed; for where that Seed is nourished, it will eat as a Canker, and such are, and will be ready to say, What needs thee to have divulged these things, seeing thou hast forgiven D.M.?

To the Reader.

Because I would willingly satisfy such Criticks, none being able, or can give so true an Interpretation of the same, as he that writ this : I have not done it as, so reflecting upon him, to recall a forgiven Debt, (though he never voluntarily came unto me, or did ingenuously confess his Abuses, or shewed Remorse) but that I could not so well give a right Understanding of the other, without making things thus plain. And further, seeing it was the way of the holy Men of old, not to favour gross Errors, so much as with Silence, as may be seen by many Instances from the Scriptures. Paul's Zeal to Christ Jesus, and his Love to Peter and Barnabas, was never the less, because he openly reprov'd Peter for his Error, and shewed the Hypocrisy of other believing Jews, and of Barnabas also; but left it upon record not only for Christians to see, but Jews, Turks, and Pagans likewise, Gal. 2. 11, 12, 13, 14. Neither was John's Love the less, because he (Rev. 2. and 3 chap.) left upon record the particular Faults of those Churches in Asia.

If it be further objected, I said there was some hopes of D. M's. mending; that was before he proceeded to this height of wickedness. However this may serve to clear me, I had no prejudice against him; but my making Appeal to them time after time, as will appear by their own Records, if they have been as true to record this as they ought, will shew I was so far from hopes by my burdens increasing, which caused me, as in Conscience I was bound, not to keep from their Cognisance such things as tend so highly to the dishonour of the Truth.

And friendly Reader, only this thing I request of thee, that thou put the favourablest Construction hereupon, the matter will bear; lest thou wrong both thy self and me. For God Almighty, who is the Searcher of all hearts, knows I have not writ this designedly, against any of the Sons and Daughters of Men; but that the naked and simple Truth, which will break through all Vails, and rend asunder all Coverings, may herein appear to satisfy thee, and which thou never canst be so truly otherwise, as from the Pen of him who hath been exercised in the same. Be pleased likewise to take notice, that all those marginal Notes, against both my own and their Answer, are mine, and which thou may judge to have been placed better elsewhere; but not professing to Scholarship herein, thou wilt the easier pass it by.

And

To the Reader.

And further, they bringing in a Novel Thing, whether it may be rationally concluded a Breach of Love and Unity on their parts, who are not willing to receive such things barely without diligent Enquiry, and to be satisfied what Ground they have for the same; from whence, by whom, and for what end it is introduced; which instead of friendly and lovingly to resolve, they fall accusing, judging, and the like. I leave these things to be considered of by the better part in these.

And now bear and give good heed to this Parable, the latter Part will unfold. There were many blind Men travelling in a Wilderness bearing of a famous City, that whoever could get to be a Citizen of it, were not only healed of all Diseases, but were made partakers of all Immunities besides. These had travelled some time, but were by reason of their Blindness neither able to find the way, nor obtain their end; so that he who was the only Heir of the City beholding their confused Travel, came to them, and enquired of them what they did there; they answered accordingly; said he, Would not you be greatly engaged to him that would do so much for you, as both to open your eyes, and cloath you with new Garments (for theirs were old and foul) and bring you into the way that leads to that City, and give you daily Food for your Journey? they all with one consent replied, Yes; so he perceiving they had Faith to be healed, restored them to sight, and brought them into the way accordingly, and charged them to hold on in it, and not to turn either to the right hand or to the left, or to set up any thing among themselves so as to cause Divisions, or to fall out by the way; for this way (saith he) alone, if you hold on in it, will answer your ends; and, saith he, if you obey me I will not be wanting to perform to you accordingly. So these Men travelled on many years together, hand in hand, very joyfully, and were preserved wonderfully. But on a time it happened, that some of them began to exercise their Judgment, so as to bring it into practice, and were not content to acquiesce in the same as to themselves only, but except all submitted to them in it accordingly; though they did not in express words say such as did not were out of the way, and the like; but this they said, if any by word or deed directly discountenance it, that such were makers of Division and then said they upon that word we'll declare that such are out of Unity with us, and likewise out of the way.

Alas! say some, what is the matter now? have we travelled these so long and many years together with you, in this peaceable way, and which he that opened our eyes said to us we should hold on in it, and

To the Reader.

not fall out by the way, or bring in any thing that may divide us, or cause trouble to any Traveller in this way; for he that brought us in to it said, The way it self, if we persevere, was able to bring us to our desired Haven. And we have found it so by good Experience, and he that hath brought us into it hath hitherto preserved us, and we see no need of these things, after our so long travel, now to be brought in amongst us; on this wise we feel our bread save, and our water fresh every morning, wee'l persevere on, according as he which opened our eyes commanded us, and obey him, and not do so to you, to bring in or set up any thing that may cause questioning by any Traveller in the way; for our Journey is pretty much over, the City we see before us, and the way the same, streight and pleasant, which encourages us to hold on in it, as we began, believing him who hath promised is faithful and will perform.

24th of the 9th
Month, 1676.

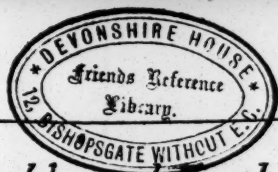
I am a Lover of Truth,

Peace, and Righteousness,

and thy Christian Friend;

RICHARD SMITH.

The



*The Light Unchangeable, and Truth,
and good Order justified, &c.*

IT is reasonable, that as a Civil, so a Christian Society, should have power to preserve it self; and no Society can be preserved without Order; so no Order can well be observed without Government, which must needs be by intrusting some Persons with the Care and Power of maintaining this Order. And that it may the more effectually attain its end, Heaven hath declared it, as its own Institution, and impress upon it the Lustre of Divine Authority.

And Government, though it derives its extract from Divine Institution, yet because it is to be managed by Men who are subject to be drawn aside, doth often in those Cases prove, by their neglect, too uncertain a Guard for all they pretend to secure, (in that common safety) because the Trustees of this Power may, either through Ignorance or Depravedness of their Affection, distort it to satisfy their private Wills, or by an imprudent management cause some to languish under the same; so that such important Persons being sometimes intrusted in (or at least so take upon them) the same, by not taking that heed and care which is required, make or suffer frequent Incursions upon the Rights of others, as hath been too oft upon me, as by the Sequel will appear; having beyond all bounds of Civility been so pincht with Wrongs and Delays from such who pretend most to Justice, Righteousness, and Truth: But being free from the Defects of those Lies and Slanders, do bid defiance to Envy to look me in the Face, and Malice to do its worst in these matters; so that I can with a safe Conscience, being necessitated hereunto, and having Truth on my side, which is very dear unto me, appear on this wise, and that with boldness on its behalf: and not only in defence of my Christian Reputation and Practice; but shew, since my Friends have refused to be admonished, their too great Confidence of their Abilities in these matters, which they profess to manage, and that upon Truths Account.

I shall not meddle with things of the matter in hand, further than I am necessitated to clear my self, and concerns me, as ever hating such things, as truly below the Spirit of a Man; but have a tender regard to the Sober and Conscientious in all Sorts of Professions in Religion. And having walked with these People from the beginning, in all Humility and Lowliness, bearing part with them in all Trials and Sufferings that have befallen them upon a Religious Account; but now of late having had some Exercise amongst them, they setting up Women to have Meetings, separate and apart by themselves, to look after Affairs of the Church; upon such Censures, as being dissatisfied therewith, I both spoke and writ to them concerning the same, in that Sobriety becoming a Christian. And finding such things not agreeing to what I understand in the holy Scriptures, having a venerable Esteem of them above all other Writings, and do daily read or hear them read in my Family; having through Gods love to me, received of Him (though but in a small measure) a manifestation of that Divine Spirit which gives me to believe those Writings to be true, and those general Commands, (which is to live a holy, righteous, peaceable Life, and out of Sin) are to be obeyed; and those sweet Instructions, holy Exhortations, and godly Directions, Rules; which none can be said truly to obey and follow so as to have acceptance with the Lord, which believeth not in Christ Jesus, who is *the true Light which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*. Likewise Mans not believing in the Light, but slighting and disregarding it, cannot nor doth destroy the thing in it self, but it remains near to and with Man, yet it doth not joyn with Evil, neither hath it any agreement with the Works of Darknes; it sheds it self abroad in the Hearts of all that believe in it; the intents of all Hearts it makes manifest, and is a Reprover of the works of Iniquity. This is it by which God searches and sees into the Hearts of all Mankind, to the Gentle, Good and Obedient, it makes manifest to the Eternal God to the good of such. But the Disobedient, Stiff-necked and Rebellious it accuseth before the Throne of Gods Justice; for that which knows every evil Thought, and sees Sins though committed never so secretly, as no man can see, hear or discern, must be so near to sinful Man as to discern those thoughts of his Heart; and I believe is concluded by all Men, who have any sense of the Dealings of God to be in Man; though at a distance from all that which is wicked, corruptible, and ungod-

ungodly, and yet beholds it. This Light is pure, and the Appearance of it glorious to all them who love it and obey it. This changeth not, neither is there any variation in it self; for it is always one and the same, but as it operates upon different Natures or Objects, unto which it joyns or stands at a distance from; that is to say, the good Ground it causeth to bring forth good Fruit unto God; the cursed Ground, out of which briars and thorns do arise, it kindles Fire in that which will not be quenched: for Faith and Unbelief are two different Objects, as Light and Darkness. This with more I can say of the Light of Christ Jesus, in which and by which I have believed in that one God, and this one God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and that the Father is the Father of the Son, and the Son is the Son of the Father, and the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of the Father and the Son. And herein do I exercise my self to have always a Conscience void of offence towards God, and towards Men. 1 John 5. 7.

And however these Lines are taken, I can truly say, I have no prejudice, evil or hard thoughts lodging in my bosom towards any of the Sons and Daughters of Men, how hardly I may be thought on, or have been abused by any; and therefore am armed against all sinister Interpretations, that Malice and Suspicion can put upon them.

My Friends in this County have every Month a Meeting, and one great Meeting once a Quarter, where commonly two or three, or more, from every particular Meeting, meet all together about such affairs as is requisite to keep and preserve Societies in Peace and Unity; and they who commonly meet at those called quarterly Meetings are these and more;

William Sandey.

Thomas Janney.

John Badiley.

John Worrall.

John Sharples.

Alexander Lawrence.

Thomas Brassey.

John Newton.

Thomas Rooland.

Richard Milnor.

John Symcock.

Arthur Wilcox.

Joseph Endon.

John Clower.

Thomas Briggs.

And these had promised to act in these Meetings on such matters, according to Gospel order, mentioned in the Scriptures, *If thy Brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, if he shall hear thee thou hast gained thy Brother; but if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more,* Mat. 18. 15, 16, 17.

that in the mouth of two or three Witnesses every word may be established; and if he neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen Man, and a Publican.

And likewise according to their own Orders, (which as becoming Men, much more Christians, they should have truly observed, performed and obeyed) which is, that if any Disorder be, it be took course with; and the manner is, that if the offending Party be so stubborn that he will not hear and be subject, after he is admonished before Friends of that particular Meeting he belongs to; then to bring it before Friends at their monthly Meeting; and if it cannot be brought to an end, then afterward to bring it to the quarterly Meeting; and if the Party offending, after diligent Enquiry, Examination, and Trial, will not submit and give satisfaction for the wrong, then Friends to give forth a Testimony against such.

George Fox's Order in the Year 1667.

If there happen any difference betwixt Friend and Friend of any matters, if it cannot be ended before the general Meeting, let half a dozen Friends from the general Meeting be ordered to put a speedy end thereto, that Justice be speedily done, so that Friends may not be one to another Sorrow and Trouble, but one another's Joy and Crown in the Lord.

Hear another Writing of George Fox's since.

The Party offending to be admonished before Friends of their own Meeting, and if he will not hear, then to bring it to the Monthly Meeting; and then if it cannot be brought to an end by the Monthly Meeting, then after to bring it to the Quarterly Meeting; and if he will not condemn it after the thing is examined and tried, then Friends to give forth a Testimony against such: for things of Difference should be judged and condemned, and never go so far as the Quarterly Meeting.

Hath the Lord indeed intrusted you in the holy Concerns of his Truth in this Day; Oh! then come and try your selves by the Light of Christ Jesus, and your own Orders which I right well know, will do none any harm; how could you in Conscience suffer him, whom none of you had any just occasion against, to ly to long under such Defamations in his Christian Reputation, in
such

such a gross manner, that it is a very shame to mention the Abuses to be given by a Member of any Religious Society, but that I am resolved to be true both to you, my self, and the Reader, and which were of concern to me to be cleared from; if you had understood your selves, it had behoved you to have had a tender Regard both upon Truths, your own, and my account, being you knew how long I suffered through some having a Prejudice against me by reason of my Practice, who never gave any just Occasion for the same; but my Patience in those Trials wore off that Prejudice, that I can say this of them, most of them since have been very loving, and ready to do any thing for me I could in Reason require.

And these my Grievances lay before you in two years and a half, nine or ten times at your quarterly Meetings; and the last Abuses, whilst the other was in depending, I laid before you four times in one Year, and which might yet have been undetermined, but that I took another Course, being wearied out with your delays. However that I might stand clear, did communicate these my Abuses to you, who pretend to rectifie such Miscarriages, that you might have kept your selves clear of the same also. I expected nothing more but that Truth and Righteousness professed might have had its free Course in and amongst all, that Justice might have run down your Streets as a Stream to have swept away all that which is contrary thereto, which is more acceptable to the Lord than Sacrifice, the neglect of which cannot otherwise but bring a Stain, and herein make you greatly faulty. Ah! you have not herein been true to that right noble Spirit, which no Iniquity nor Evil-doer can stand before uncondemned. *Prov. 21. 3.*

Your selves have and must confess, that this Man *Daniel Maddock*, a Member of your Society, hath long abused me with his bad tongue, yet whenever the Man turned to me and acknowledged his Fault for the same, as in the year 1670, I forgave him it, and desired that he might be an honest Man. He after that abused me again in the year 1671, yet after acknowledging his Fault, you know how willing I was to pass it by, desiring his Good. But in the Year 1672 he abused me in a gross manner; I spoke to him, and would have had him to have seen, confessed, and repented of his Faults, but instead of receiving my love he reviled me. Again, after a Meeting I spoke to him of it before some Friends in my House, and put them on to speak to him, but he

10 Month,
1673.

would not receive admonition; then I laid it before Friends monthly Meeting, and after that before them at their quarterly Meeting; they from that Meeting sent three Friends to speak to him and to enquire into the matter, all which they had proved, and more than my Abuses to his Face; the three Friends would have had him to have acknowledged that he had wronged me, and to leave off his Preaching and Praying in Meetings, but he would not. Now I leave all rational Men to judg, whether these things be right, for a Man to abuse and wrong me, and yet to come into my House, to speak and pray in Meetings, whom I could not own in so doing.

1 Month,
1674.

Next quarter Meeting I desired Friends to examine the matter about *D. M.* one of the three Friends whom they sent being there, but they at that Meeting did not regard herein, either Gospel Order or their own, nor did examine their Messenger, or question the Thing.

4 Month,
1674.

That I might be clear, and likewise desired the same for them, I laid it before them at their next quarterly Meeting; so that Meeting examined what Answer the three Friends, which were sent in the 10th Month 1673, had from *D. M.* Answer was made by one of the three Friends which were sent. So at that Meeting they caused a Paper to be writ and sent to *D. M.* and my Submission to Friends was such that at their Request I condescended to write that Paper for them.

7 Month,
1674.

Next quarterly Meeting I desired Friends would take some Course according to their own Orders in this Case, for I lay under great Burdens by reason of one who comes into my House, and takes upon him to speak and pray in Meetings, which neither my self nor some others can own; but he owns himself a Member of you, so that you should take those godly Courses as this thing requires. All they did at this Meeting in this Case, was to examine the Friend they sent him the Paper by: And he said, he could get no satisfactory Answer from *D. M.* only sent two Friends to speak to him again, which signified nothing.

10 Month,
1674.

Next quarterly Meeting I renewed my Complaints, and all that Meeting did was to examine their Messengers, what Answer *D. M.* gave them; they said they could get no satisfactory Answer, or Words to that effect.

Presently after this Meeting *Nathan Madock*, Brother to *D. M.* having a Hurt of one Leg, whom I had in Cure, and coming into his

his Chamber one Morning, his Wife, a strange Woman and *D. M.* being in the Room, I asked my Patient how he did? says *D. M.* *Thou wilt kill my Brother as thou didst Elizabeth Morgan:* and called me a Drunkard and a Liar; the strange Woman bad him hold his peace: I immediately departed the Room, being a Man never given to such Contests, and below me as a Man and a Christian to enter into Discourse with such a litigious Man.

This Person *E. M.* whom he mentions, died above ten years ago of a violent Fever, which then was raging in this City, and had been sick of it above fourteen days before she sent to me, I then being close Prisoner in the Castle, and not in a Capacity to do for her or any other what I was willing; howbeit some Friend came to me and told me that *E. M.* desired me to send her something to cool her drought: upon which I sent her the Tincture of Roses made up with Syrup of Citrons, whereupon I heard it was pleasing to her. And for his calling me a Drunkard and a Liar, I believe there is none that knows me, but they may say the Man was envious, for my Conversation amongst whom I live is better known; and its my Resolution I'll have Truth in my Heart and Mouth whatever befalls me; and for strong Drink, I never affected it so, as agreeing either with Body or Mind.

These are no small Criminations for a Member of such a professing People to charge a Man afresh withall, and not having given any satisfaction for his former Abuses which were of the like nature. And that this Man *D. M.* might shew himself arrived at the height of Envy, in the Meeting at my House whiles I was at Prayer, he openly called me a Devil and a Deceiver: It is a very shame that such Abuses should be suffered by a Member of any Civil Society, much more of a Religious; but that they should have power to preserve themselves from the Taints and Infections of hurtful Spirits, for such tend not to further Knowledge, Increase of Holiness, or Peace; but Strife, Divisions, Rents, Backbitings, and Revenge. So that Friends not performing those wholsom Orders agreed upon to act by, as in *pag. 3.* have herein fouled and stained themselves, and are herein faulty, and much lieth (and more will) upon them till they acknowledge their Miscarriage herein, and for the future act more wisely. After I had done Prayer *D. M.* keeping on in his accustomed manner of
talking

talking, I went to him and put him out of my House, and desired him to forbear coming again into it, till he had learned better Manners.

1 Month, 1675. Next quarterly Meeting my Occasions would not permit me to be there, howbeit the thing was before them, and I did not hear by any, that any thing was done for the clearing Truth, me, and themselves from such an unruly Member.

4 Month, 1675. The next quarterly Meeting I acquainted Friends of the late and great Abuses given by *D. M.* and desired that his Brother *N. M.* being present, and before whom they were spoke, (and whom by Gods assistance I cured) might be examined; which was accordingly done. The former Abuses had now been depending before them near three years, and my burthens increasing, and for me to keep Meetings in my House to be thus abused, and you take no more care to rectifie these things; I am dissatisfied therein, and the * Truth dishonoured thereby, (for though I had forbid him my House yet he came). So from this Meeting came three or four Friends who had a Meeting in my House, which after it was done, never examined or searched into the Cause of these great Wrongs, according as I expected, but examined another thing which was never in question, how *Chester* Meeting did approve of *D. M.* speaking amongst them, and desired him to hold his peace in Meetings.

*This I told
them with
Tears.*

7 month, 1675. Next quarterly Meeting I told them both of the former and late Wrongs. *Alexander Lawrence* at this Meeting examined *N. M. Daniels* Brother, about those late Wrongs as afore. *N. M.* said they were foul Words. *A. L.* says that he said something in this Meeting about these my great Abuses. But he would do himself and that Meeting Justice to examine their Records, and bring to Light what was done; for I affirm there was nothing done by that Meeting in this Case. These things grieved my Soul to see them who make so great a Profession of Truth and Justice, carry thus.

10 month, 1675. Next quarterly Meeting I was not wanting to put them in remembrance of their neglect. That Meeting after all this sends to *D. M.* a Copy of that Paper they sent him the 4th Month 1674, by *Tho. Guin* and *N. M.* his Brother, but order nothing to *D. M.* about the other late Abuses. So *T. G.* and *N. M.* came to me, and brought a Paper from *D. M.* of a Confession of those Wrongs done me in 1672. I told his Brother, if that was true which was writ,

writ, (for *D. M.* could not write) why did they not bring *D.* down to me being so near me; for except he came to me to make an acknowledgmet accordingly and shew some penitency, I had no reason to believe that Writing, neither could he be clear in the matter. He came not, yet Friends received his Paper, but upon what account they never acquainted me.

Next quarterly Meeting I laid these things before them again, and the Disorder in *Chester* Meeting; they order his Brother *Nathan* to speak to *D.* to condemn those words before them he spoke them; but they did not injoyn him to condemn it from the bottom of his Heart, and to clear the Truth and *Rich. Smith* from those wicked Slanders and Lies, and truly repent of the same, and judge himself therein; otherwise they were bound in Conscience to testify against *D. M.* and to clear Truth themselves, and *R. S.* as far as in them lay. But this was not *N. M.*s order or directions. So one first day after this *N. M.* came to me, and told me, that he had spoke to his Brother *D.* about those words Friends ordered him, and said *D.* was willing to judg himself, and clear me before them he spoke those Words; and asked me where it should be, at my House, or at his? I said where he pleased. But this week passed and nothing was donẽ. Next first-day some being dissatisfied, spoke to *D. M.* about those bad words before some Friends, I being present; *D. M.* then before them all denied that he spake them, and askt who durst say so to his Face? I said, both thy Brother & Sister, who are present, heard thee; and I further said to *Nathan*, how doth this agree to make thy words true, which thou didst this day week tell me, that thou hadst spoke to him, and that thy Brother *D.* was willing to judg himself, as above? if this be not adding sin to sin, I am mistaken. So seeing things were running round again into the old Delays, next day about four or five a clock in the evening, I went to his Brother *N. M.* and told him, I was now resolved to call his Brother *D.* before the Magistrate, for such carriages and doing as this did not satisfy me; I had used all fair means, and with much Patience had born long, and those ways had not answered; and it was neither fit or convenient for me to ly any longer under such Slanders; and it is just and right thy Brother do clear me from the same, and take that shame upon himself, which by those foul Abuses he intended to have thereby defamed me. Much I spoke to *N.* to this purpose; insomuch that he seeing my Resolution, being concerned for his Brother

1 Month,
1676.

talking, I went to him and put him out of my House, and desired him to forbear coming again into it, till he had learned better Manners.

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4 Month, 1675. The next quarterly Meeting I acquainted Friends of the late and great Abuses given by *D. M.* and desired that his Brother *N. M.* being present, and before whom they were spoke, (and whom by Gods assistance I cured) might be examined; which was accordingly done. The former Abuses had now been depending before them near three years, and my burthens increasing, and for me to keep Meetings in my House to be thus abused, and you take no more care to rectifie these things; I am dissatisfied therein, and the * Truth dishonoured thereby, (for though I had forbid him my House yet he came). So from this Meeting came three or four Friends who had a Meeting in my House, which after it was done, never examined or searched into the Cause of these great Wrongs, according as I expected, but examined another thing which was never in question, how *Chester* Meeting did approve of *D. M.* speaking amongst them, and desired him to hold his peace in Meetings.

7 month, 1675. Next quarterly Meeting I told them both of the former and late Wrongs. *Alexander Lawrence* at this Meeting examined *N. M. Daniels* Brother, about those late Wrongs as afore. *N. M.* said they were foul Words. *A. L.* says that he said something in this Meeting about these my great Abuses. But he would do himself and that Meeting Justice to examine their Records, and bring to Light what was done; for I affirm there was nothing done by that Meeting in this Case. These things grieved my Soul to see them who make so great a Profession of Truth and Justice, carry thus.

10 month, 1675. Next quarterly Meeting I was not wanting to put them in remembrance of their neglect. That Meeting after all this sends to *D. M.* a Copy of that Paper they sent him the 4th Month 1674, by *Tho. Guin* and *N. M.* his Brother, but order nothing to *D. M.* about the other late Abuses. So *T. G.* and *N. M.* came to me, and brought a Paper from *D. M.* of a Confession of those Wrongs done me in 1672. I told his Brother, if that was true which was writ,

*This I told
them with
Tears.*

writ, (for *D. M.* could not write) why did they not bring *D.* down to me being so near me; for except he came to me to make an acknowledgment accordingly and shew some penitency, I had no reason to believe that Writing, neither could he be clear in the matter. He came not, yet Friends received his Paper, but upon what account they never acquainted me.

1 Month,
1676.

Next quarterly Meeting I laid these things before them again, and the Disorder in *Chester* Meeting; they order his Brother *Nathan* to speak to *D.* to condemn those words before them he spoke them; but they did not injoin him to condemn it from the bottom of his Heart, and to clear the Truth and *Rich. Smith* from those wicked Slanders and Lies, and truly repent of the same, and judge himself therein; otherwise they were bound in Conscience to testify against *D. M.* and to clear Truth themselves, and *R. S.* as far as in them lay. But this was not *N. M.* order or directions. So one first day after this *N. M.* came to me, and told me, that he had spoke to his Brother *D.* about those words Friends ordered him, and said *D.* was willing to judg himself, and clear me before them he spoke those Words; and asked me where it should be, at my House, or at his? I said where he pleased. But this week passed and nothing was don^e. Next first-day some being dissatisfied, spoke to *D. M.* about those bad words before some Friends, I being present; *D. M.* then before them all denied that he spake them, and askt who durst say so to his Face? I said, both thy Brother & Sister, who are present, heard thee; and I further said to *Nathan*, how doth this agree to make thy words true, which thou didst this day week tell me, that thou hadst spoke to him, and that thy Brother *D.* was willing to judg himself, as above? if this be not adding sin to sin, I am mistaken. So seeing things were running round again into the old Delays, next day about four or five a clock in the evening, I went to his Brother *N. M.* and told him, I was now resolved to call his Brother *D.* before the Magistrate, for such carriages and doing as this did not satisfy me; I had used all fair means, and with much Patience had born long, and those ways had not answered; and it was neither fit or convenient for me to ly any longer under such Slanders; and it is just and right thy Brother do clear me from the same, and take that shame upon himself, which by those foul Abuses he intended to have thereby defamed me. Much I spoke to *N.* to this purpose; inso much that he seeing my Resolution, being concerned for his Brother

Brother D. went or sent presently to D. and got him, as he came and told me that night about eight or nine a clock, I being in Bed, that he had got his Brother D. to confess and acknowledg before the strange Woman that he had wronged me, I said I ought to have been present. So that the fear of a righteous and national Law caused both D. and N. to bestir themselves to do, and get that done in four or five hours time, which they had time enough to have done before, and at a more seasonable time; and D. to confess and condemn that now, which but 25 or 26 hours before he denied.

So that this Law, which is to preserve my good Name, Person, and Estate (and so every free-born *English* Mans) from Invasion of others, is a better Inheritance than is derived from my Parents; for though I may have an Estate left, yet if the Law preserve it not, any one at pleasure may invade it and take it from me.

I desired Nat. when he was in my Chamber that Night, to bring his Brother D. down to me in the Morning, which he did accordingly. I said to D. *Both thou and all that hears of these thy abusive Slanders may know that I never had any evil or revenge in my heart towards thee, but ever desired thy good, and never gave any occasion for these Calumnies, by which thou hast so traduced me; for if I had been a Man that had sought after revenge, thou hast given me too much occasion, if thou hadst been worth much, to have weakned thee in the same. But as I am not one of that Spirit, so I desire thou mayest come truly to repent of these things, that so God may forgive thee, for I do.* He said very little. And further, I heard thou shouldst say at that time when thou so abusedst me, that I called thee a Cheater; it is likely thy bad Words might provoke me to say, as I went out of the Room, there was no great Credit to be given to a Cheater; Which Words (though there is a sober Scruple on me how things are) I should not have spoken; neither do I here mention these things as reflecting upon him for what I have passed by.

And though my Friends be stiff, and refuse to be admonished, yet I will tell them (and the Reader) this manner of sending a Paper or Messenger to speak to the Offender in this and the like cases of Difference, and receiving a Paper or Answer by a Messenger from him, is not right, or according to Truth; for how can they in this case receive satisfaction in a Paper or by a Messenger from the Offender, except the Offender hath first given satisfaction

faction for the wrong to him whom he hath so wronged; no, this is not the way to decide controversies aright, or to make peace, heal breaches, and piece Fractures. This way they must go and do, if they will go aright: After the offended Party hath obeyed those Commands, *Mat. 18. 15, 16.* If the Offender still persist, and the matter be brought before them; they should in such cases call the Offender before them, and search into the Nature, Ground, and Cause of the Offence, and so they will thereby better relish the nature of the Offender, which they can never do so well otherwise; and to have both Parties face to face, and then endeavour as much as in them lieth a Reconciliation betwixt them, which if then the wrong-doer (the wrong being of such a nature that it becomes a Prejudice to the Party so wronged, and consequently to themselves) doth not repent of the same, but refuse to hear and be subject; then they ought to give forth a testimony against such: which Censures being neglected, they cannot avoid growing foul and faulty. I desire they may not by covering over their errors herein run into more and greater.

At the last quarterly Meeting they had received one *Tho. Dampot* in amongst them again, (what he was or had done behoves not me to mention, further than concerns my own Case,) after which he, being one of *Chester* Meeting, came into my House, and began to speak in Meetings; which both my self and others judged was not right, or his place, except he had spoke and declared of his true Repentance for his Transgression, and shewed it accordingly. So at their quarterly Meeting, 6th of the last 4th Month, I laid these things in short before them in writing, and their Carriage at that Meeting, when and how they received *T. D.* and in my absence received a false Accusation from *T. D.* against me, (a bad Omen) which is contrary both to Gospel-Order, or their own likewise: for they should not have *heard any thing from him, before he

**Alexander Lawrence* said they heard (& why did you so?) but not received. Then how came *A. L.* to repeat *T. D.*'s Charge; and whether it be the duty of any Man, or Men, that know their place, and who sit to hear and determine Controversies, to take the accusation of any in the Accuseds absence; and then when the Accuser & the Accused, being both present, and have both submitted to their Censures or Judgment, for him or them who are to hear both Parties accordingly.

to stand up in the Accusers place, and report the Accusation in the Accusers Name, the Accuser being present, and then say they received it not; as *A. L.* did *T. D.*'s Case to me. How could *A. L.* tell that *T. D.* could have had that boldness, so to have accused me to my face? many can tell lies, and bite behind, who cannot or dare not so speak to an honest Mans face. Surely such Carriages as these are below a noble Heathen *Festus*, *Acts 25.* sitting in Judgment; and though, the Jews had accused *Paul* to him at *Jerusalem*, yet when he sat on the Judgment-seat, did not take their Accusation, and say, *Paul*, these Jews have accused thee so and so, but heard the Accusation then before the Accuseds face; neither would *Felix* hear *Paul* make his Defence in the absence of his Accusers, but said, *I will hear thee when thy Accusers are come*, *Acts 23. 35.*

had first spoke to me, if he had any just Cause, inſomuch that I coming in afterwards, and had ſate a while, *A. L.* ſaid publickly, *T. D.* had there accuſed me that I had forbid him my Houſe. I replied, I had heard that he had ſo belied me; ſo that now before this Meeting I deſire he might make out that Charge, for I was there to deny that ever I forbid *T. D.* to come into my Houſe. So he fell to asking Questions, did not I do ſo and ſo? I ſaid, what is this to make forth thy Accuſation in charging me forbidding thee my Houſe, and to report ſuch Lies as theſe behind my back? thou now oughtſt to have ſo clear a Ground, Proof, or Circumſtance to accompany thy Accuſation, that it might gain credit in the Auditors ears; ſo that there need no Questions now to be asked, for (as I ſaid) I do abſolutely deny thy Charge: So I was going to have ſhewed the Meeting more, but was interrupted by *A. L.* that I had not that Chriſtian Liberty. And inſtead of reproving

* Which was, whether I was willing *T. D.* ſhould come into my houſe? I replied, why ſhould ſuch Questions be asked, when I never forbid him to come in, I know not, except it be to make my ſelf

guilty of his falſe Charge of forbidding him to come into my houſe, which I never did; I told them my Door was open for all, Profeſſor and Profane, provided they knew their place, and made no diſturbance, nor offered abuſes to me and Friends in my houſe, and if *T. D.* will not come, there was more than at preſent they ſaw; for it is my judgment if he comes amongſt us he will talk in Meetings, (and ſo it proved). And there was ſomething more of a weighty concern, which ſome of them knew of, and whom I ſhewed to ſince, which belongs not to this place to mention. *A. L.* ſaid, *T. D.* ſaid at that Meeting, he would do any thing I would have him to do. *A. L.* ſhould then have given righteous Judgment, for he knew *T. D.* had grievouſly belied me, and not to have received him in with a Lie in his mouth, and then asked me Questions to ſtrengthen ſuch turbulent ſpirits; no, I better know my place; it not being proper for any man to be Judge in his own caſe, and moſt eſpecially when he has referred his matter for others to be Judges of: if I ſhould have taken ſuch a thing upon me, I queſtion how it would it have been taken. But thoſe words of *T. D.* proved a Flaſh, as his Carriage hath ſince made it appear; for I ſent to him, he being in Town, to come ſpeak with me, but he put it off, and came not. However I will not give a partial Relation of things, but Truth ſo far as I know, for I would not do any man wrong to juſtify my ſelf.

required

required of me, to keep Meetings in my House for such to talk amongst us; it is a weighty thing to speak of the things of God, and such above others ought to be both sound and serious, and that their Lives and Conversations might adorn it; for where it is otherwise, the blessed Truth cannot, nor hath that Influence to shine in its Beauty: many have talked of what Truth was, but ah! how few live the Life of it. And it is not a bare Confession, and Profession of the Truth only, that satisfies me, but Living the holy Life of it.

Richard Smith.

So having no Answer to this from their quarterly Meeting, having by experience found their Carelessness and Negligence in these Affairs, my burthens instead of being eased increasing, desired Friends to provide another Meeting-Place.

The 2d of last 8th Month, I signified to them mentioned and concerned herein, my resolution of making these things publick; but before I did it, I gave them the Meeting 19th of the same, that thereby making things thus plain, they might have acknowledged they had not been so faithful in the Trust they took upon them, nor so loving, true and just in their Carriage to me in these matters as they ought, which I told them would have been better than thus to stand it out; but instead of doing so, they drew this Conclusion, that they had power; I leave them to explain the extent of it in this Case; and *A. Lawrence* said in the Name of that Meeting, they had power to suspend their Judgment. I asked them upon what Ground and Cause they could do that in this Case, and till what time? for said I, if you suspend it and determine not (being satisfied, as they all were, that I was very much wronged and burthened) when you will put an end unto such things, all things being clear, and no Objection lying in the Case; they cannot avoid being unjust; as here in this Case Meeting after Meeting, and Year after Year, and so may be *ad infinitum*; and may be justly charged with Breach both of Gospel-Order, their own, and *G. F's*, and in no little of oppressing me; for that 18 of *Mat.* makes against them to defer on this wise in this my Case. Their Answer to me, was, Christ limited to no time, and that they had power, but till what time they were silent. I could desire they had a better Understanding in such things as these, or else take upon them less; for I will them to know where time is not limited, is

bespeaks the present time ; and I am sure there is not a more positive Command in all the Scriptures as to such matters of private wrongs, as that of *Mat. 18. 15, 16, 17.* And that God has given his Church power, as well to reject as to try Spirits, is not denied, and to rational Men the Judgment that Christ proposeth in the matter is sufficient, *But if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a beaten Man, &c.* Their own Order they have transgressed against, which limits to a time, which is, as in *pag. 3.* when all is performed accordingly, then Friends to give forth a Testimony ; *George Fox's*, which limits to a time likewise, as in *pag. 3.* that is, when the thing is examined and tried, then Friends to give forth a Testimony ; and likewise his Order, 1667. as in *pag. 3.* there he speaks of the present time, and that Justice be speedily done. And for them by such Constructions and private Interpretations to seek to evade the Dint of Justice in such cases, will prove but fig-leav'd Garments, and foul and stain them greatly, which an ingenuous Confession of their Errors herein would have been more Christian-like and Satisfactory. For I must tell them, that if they persist and go on this wise, they will neither preserve themselves nor others ; for that which hath been my case, may be anothers. And defaming and endeavouring to destroy a Mans good Name is Persecution ; and never tell me of love to my Soul, when so little is manifested otherwise ; for I must say, I never was so *traded amongst any People I ever was amongst.

* These being not all.

At the Breaking up of this Meeting, some were saying something of the Meeting being gone from my House ; I said, the Cause lay at their door, and since they could not order things better, they must not be against me disposing of my own. *Tho. Briggs* and *Tho. Guin* replied, none gainsaying them, and told me plainly, that my House was not my own ; to which I said, if so, you will make the Coat on my Back not to be mine : I shall leave these Men, as not fitting to be Instructors of others, who can maintain (and contend for) such things as these ; for if what I bought and paid for be not mine, they will alter the Dialect and Intent of our *English* Speech, that we shall not understand one another. I know all the Creation is God's ; what then ? is it therefore become a Transgression for me to speak Scripture-Language, to say what I buy and pay for is my own ; and the House I now live in my own hired House ? This is not the way

Acts 28. 30.

to

to deal with me ; for that which must win upon me, must be both by speaking and doing Truth, which ever had pure and sound reason in it. Luke 16. 10.

He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much ; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.

This following Paper will open the Parable in the Preface.

A Paper bearing date at London, 27th of the 3d Month, 1675. at which are William Sandeys, Alexander Lawrence, John Symcock, Thomas Brassey, and Thomas Brigs, their Hands ; all of this County.

Say you in the third Particular of the said Paper, concerning Men and Womens Meetings,

That it is your Judgment and Testimony, in the Word of God's Wisdom ; that the Rise and Practice, Setting up and Establishment of Men and Womens Meetings in the Church of Christ, in this our Generation, is according to the Mind and Counsel of God, and done in the Ordering and leading of the Eternal Spirit ; and that it is the Duty of all Friends and Brethren, in the Power of God in all parts, to be diligent therein, and to encourage and further each in that blessed Work and Practice ; that Friends and Brethren in their respective Countyes encourage their faithful and grave Women in the Settlement of the said Meetings. And if any professing the Truth shall either by word or deed directly

* None can truly countenance that they are dissatisfied with, seeing no ground for the setting up Womens Meetings in the Church of Christ, but what you say, & which some of you once gain said, so that your saying and unsaying

shews you unstable and mutable ; and yet you would be limiting and censuring, and have subjection yielded to you ; but doth not this favour of the Nature of Division, though coloured : over so as to impress it upon others ? for if the Church was at Unity before, (as it ought) why should you bring in that which you were conscious would make Divisions ? or else why did you pass your Excommunication before hand ? Had you been so wise in spiritual things, as you pretend, you should not have brought in things at this rate ; I must tell you, the Cause of Division herein lies at your doors ; and seeing you were but profelyted to this Opinion, you shew great weakness herein, and that wise, sober, understanding Men in these Affairs in time may come to see, that you have herein laid the Ground for such Rents and Divisions, as will not easily be healed, but by your recalling your Censures, and leaving every one to own, or not own, such things, according as they may be persuaded in their own minds : For none can be out of unity with the Church of Christ, and Order of the Gospel, and in it at the same time.

in that work or service: let such be admonished according to the Order of the Gospel: and if they receive it not, but resist Counsel, and persist in the work of Division, We cannot but look upon them, as therein not in the Unity with the Church of Christ, and Order of the Gospel. Thus they.

This following I sent to them, directed to
Alexander Lawrence.

MY Friends, before which Particular I knew no Ground of Division, but that the Church was in Unity and Peace, and could have desired you had not writ on this wise, being very much dissatisfied therewith, and that not one Instance from Scripture brought to justify the same; we having declared to the World, that our Principles and Practice are no other than the Scriptures declare of, and bear witness to. And being one from my Child-hood, who hath travelled after the Kingdom of Heaven, my chiefest care hath been, and still is, that I may receive nothing in and upon a religious account, though never so seemingly fair, but what I may be satisfied to have the Answer of God to my Soul in the performance of; for if I be not mistaken, the Apostacy and great Deviation from the Truth first entred by setting up things by little and little, which were not in the beginning. Dear Friends, bear with me, God knows my heart, I have no other end than to be satisfied herein; therefore desire a moderate, plain, friendly and satisfactory Answer to these following.

- I. *What Example or Command have you in the Scriptures of Truth, thus to sit up Womens Meetings, separate and apart, and for what, in the Church of Christ, and call it Gospel-Order? And whether any one, or a few together, may take liberty to lay anew, alter, or add to that which was laid in the *beginning, and plead the Dictates and leadings of the Spirit for their rule? if so, I would know what errors may not be run into under that pretence: not that the Spirit of God will lead into any thing but Truth, which is of its own nature; but then it would be worth answering, What evident testimony have you, that you can give, that you are thus led to set up Womens Meetings in the Church thus in these parts, and for what end? and which were*

Amongst us!

were not in the beginning by the Spirit of God, and so to impose them on Believers, and call them Gospel-Order ?

What Gospel of Christ was that which Friends walked according to the Order of many years ago ? and was not then the Church compleat as to Fundamentals ? or if not, what wanted it to constitute it a Church before Womens Meetings were set up here on this wise ? which Novelism, not being submitted to, such are out of ; and whether it be convenient that I, or any, should run into, and take up the Practice of any thing, only because you say it, and would have me so to do, before I be fully perswaded in my own mind ; according to that good Mans saying, who had kept nothing back, but had declared to them in that Age the whole Counsel of God, and was indued with a more clear discerning, than I hope any of us will have acknowledged to have received in this Age, of what might make for the Churches Good, Rom. 14. 13. Peace and Welfare ; and desired that they might not judge one another, but rather that none put a stumbling block in his Brothers way ; and beseeched them that none might cause Divisions and Offences contrary to the Doctrine which they had learned ? And whether any sticking close to those Doctrines and Practices which first united us together, ought to be by you counted a Maker of Division, and so judged out of Unity with the Church of Christ, and Order of the Gospel ?

Wherein, and in what stood the Unity of the Church of Christ many years ago, before Womens Meetings were set up thus in the Church separate and apart ? and for what end in these parts ? and whether it was the way of the holy Men of old, thus to impose things upon Believers, but rather exhort them to be fully perswaded in their own minds ? And whether it be the way of God to restrain or limit any for speaking or writing what may be on their Spirits, touching (being dissatisfied in) things of a religious nature, and who have no other end or design than to take up or lay down such things ? They may have the Answer from the Lord, that therein he is well pleased with them in so doing, and to whom alone they must give an account of all their deeds done in the body ; but be accounted a Maker of Division, which that of God in your Consciences shall answer to the contrary, I never so behaved my self.

That whoever introduces, or brings in, and sets up such things in the Church, and which was not by the holy Men of God practised, and so

So would impose them upon Believers, and would thus limit and restrain, that none should speak or write of what they are dissatisfied with, are doing as they would be done by? And whether this be the way to preserve and keep in Unity? And whether others have not a measure of Gods Spirit to direct them what to do, and what to leave undone as well as you? Or if they submit not to that which they see no Ground for the Practice of, will you say such are makers of Division? And whether where the first Occasion of Offence was given, there was not the first Breach of Unity?

Chester, the 21 of
5 Month, 1676.

By one who hath obtained
Peace with the Unchangeable
God, and desires and labours to
keep in the same, which is the
Ground of Unity, Peace, and
Concord amongst good Men.

Richard Smith.

Postscript.

My Friends, I could desire that you would read that 14 Chapter of Romans in that Light it was writ in, and impose nothing upon such Censures, as that particular afore mentioned by you, upon any of the tender Lambs of Gods Fold, and who are dear and precious in his sight, but rather exhort all in true Love to be persuaded and satisfied that God hath manifested a measure of his Divine Light in their hearts to lead out of all unnecessary things, and to lead into that which he is well pleased with, in the performance of; knowing that all must render an account to God for themselves: for when that of God in the beginning was gone from, Man went from his true Guide, and was led by that which led him into Error and Darknes.

Judas and the
Jews pag. 16.

Hear what William Pen says about F. P.s Innovation. 'I have hitherto thought, that a Society going from, or adding to what it was when truly called a Church, was that which only did unchurch it, and not its continuing as it was: and if this be good arguing, the People called Quakers remain still the same Church, but their Adversaries not the same Members. In short, where the first Occasion of Offence was given, there was the first Breach of Unity. Had the Church imposed upon them, there would be some

‘some reason for varying of her Character, and condemn her as fallen; but the Innovation being their own, she is not accountable to them, but they to her for such unwarrantable Novelties. So the Question is not whether the Quakers impose, but whether they did not innovate, all was well till this.

‘*J. P.*s. Innovation what it was you know, and are not ignorant that it brought Division instead of Unity, Confusion instead of Order, Heart-burnings instead of Love, and diverted the minds of some from the more weighty things of Gods Living and Spiritual Law. Pag. 28.

‘Your Innovation is Judgment and Practice likewise, and that upon very high Censures. They that have read of those called Ecclesiastical Histories, may see what Divisions those that brought in new and strange Doctrines and Practices bred amongst them. And ah! that you had foreseen the inconveniency that such things brought, and had been aware.

Alexander Lawrence's Answer to mine, I take it in the Name of all the rest, because he says We, with my Reply thereto.

AS for not one Instance brought from the Scripture to justify the same, we having declared to the World, that our Principles and Practices are no other than the Scriptures declare of and bear witness to; this is too large, for I would know of thee, what Scripture thou hast, being it is thy Principle and Practice, to deny Water-Baptism, and Breaking of Bread, and Drinking of Wine, and not to practise neither; but this by the way, seeing thou wilt be so exact for the Scriptures. But though we do say our Principles and Practices are agreeable with the Principles and Practices of the holy Men of God recorded in the * Scriptures of Truth; yet we never asserted the Scriptures to be the Ground and Rule of our Principles and Practices, but the unerring Spirit of God. So I come to thy first Query.— Answer.

*Then where is mine too large? the Spirit doth not deny its own Testimony.

A. L. Methinks my Sober, Conscientious Questions had required a more friendly, careful and weighty Answer than to begin thus. Oh! sin not, and think that Grace will abound. I am confirmed Reply.

* Though thou
knewest it be-
fore.

1 Cor. 8. 6.

2 Cor. 11. 4.

Gal. 1. 8, 9.

firmed, that thou and them that adhere to thee herein are be-
sides the true and living way, which leads to Unity, Life, and
Truth, which the Liar is out of; for no Lie is of the Truth. I
declare to * thee, and all that may hear this, It was never my
Principle to deny Water-Baptism, or Breaking of Bread, and
Drinking of Wine; so that thou hast wilfully wronged me here-
in, and thy own Soul likewise; I desire thou mayest see it, and
repent. And though thou, or you (for thou writest in the Plural
much) are so stiff, because I say our Principles and Practices are
no other than the Scriptures declare of, and bear witness to; this,
sayst thou, is too large; I say, not one title, for to this you must
either bend or break. For another God there is not, another
Christ there is not, another Spirit there is not, nor another Truth
or Gospel to be preached than what the Scriptures speak of, and
bear witness to; and I never did deny (nor I hope never shall)
that which the Scriptures bear testimony of; both Water-Baptism,
Breaking of Bread, and Drinking of Wine, were of service in the
Church, and owned by me, and figured out, both a spiritual
Baptism, and the Heavenly Bread and Wine, Christ Jesus, the
Substance; and you must make a Difference betwixt performing
& fulfilling things, and denying them, and a vast Difference betwixt
leaving some Practices the Scriptures declare of, and had their
time; and setting up Practices in this day the Scriptures mention
not, as you have here done.

*Answer to the
first Query.*

To which I answer, as before; We have not, neither do we
lay down the Scripture of Truth, as the Ground of our Principles
or Practices, and so take up things by imitation as others do;
but as being led by Gods good Spirit therein, which leads into all
Truth, and in that Male and Female are one; And the Power
and Authority of that unlimited Spirit is the same in the Female
as in the Male, and in that holy Spirit and Power they are
Labourers together, and apart, as in the outward for
God, and out of that neither Male nor Female can act for God,
though they pretend never so fair, as many do, that are gone from
the Leadings of the same Spirit. The Scriptures bear testimony
of the Assemblies of the Women, and the elder Women were to
teach the younger to be sober, and love their Husbands, &c. then
it could be no great Offence sure to meet together thus to do, or
must they go from one to another thus to do? & whatsoever things
were.

were good, comely, lovely, &c. this might be done. And what Evil, Uncomeliness, or Un— is there in honest Women meeting together about the Care of the Churches business, so far as God gives them ability; and to call upon and serve the Lord, as our Women do in their Meetings? And further, I say the Church of Christ had, and hath power given them (not that they take it) to add to and take away, for the good and well-being of the Church, which was not in the beginning, and plead the Leadings and Dictates of the Spirit of God for their * Rule; and this is plain from the Scriptures; and it was Peoples going from the Leadings of the Spirit of God, that brought in the Apostacy, and kept in it, though they pretend Scriptures for their Rule in what they do.

* But may not I justly question whether you five be that Church, which hath power given to add this? And likewise whether you can plead the leadings of God's Spirit for your Rule herein.

Reply.

Whatever is written that is Truth, shall not by me be controverted or disregarded, but owned, because it is Truth; but am sorry to see such things as these disputed at this time of Day; knowing that the more spiritually minded any Man or Men are, the more they are led to understand, own, and acknowledge the Scriptures, believing that none in this day has received so full or large a manifestation of that blessed Spirit, as those Prophets and Apostles had in their day, and by which they writ; yet not barely that those Writings are the only Rule, but that blessed Spirit which ruled in them which writ, and which ever led to obey those holy Instructions and general Commands, which is to live a holy and godly Life, and without sin, and the like, and never to dis-esteem those holy Writings, or to speak, write, or act any thing contrary to them, or which recedes from them, for that will not be born; and to plead the leadings of Gods Spirit for so doing is no little Presumption; *for in him* [the heavenly Man Christ Jesus] *dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.* Again, *John 3. 34. For God giveth not the Spirit by measure to him,* Christ Jesus the heavenly Man, a Male. But you say, the Power and Authority of the unlimited Spirit is the same in the Female as the Male. This likewise is contrary to the Apostles Doctrine, who said there are diversities of Gifts by the same Spirit, dividing to every Man severally as he will, *1 Cor. 12. 4, to 12.* But where the Power and Authority of the Spirit of God was ever the same in any Female, as is in the heavenly Male, Christ Jesus, or in those Males he breathed on, *John 20. 22.* you are silent in; or

Col. 2. 9.

Col. 1. 19.

where the Scripture mentions any such Assemblies of Women to meet separate and apart by themselves, to take care of the outward Affairs and Government of the Church : for that of *Paul* to *Timus* about his pastoral Charge amongst those *Cretians*, mentions no such thing ; and I hope you will grant there are no such young Women amongst you as is there mentioned, and so needless for you to mention that ; neither that of *Plin* 4. 8. at all pertinent to your matter about setting up such Meetings. And you must know the Church has no power but what it hath of and from him, who is the Beginning, and was before all things, and is the Head of the Church, *that in all things he might have the prebeminence* ; and and whom he chose, they appointed Men to take care of the Churches business, *Acts* 6. 2, 3, 4, 5. These are not fit Consequences for you to draw from the Scriptures, to set up Womens Meetings ; for whiles you labour to evince from the Scriptures the things that are not there, or to put wrong Constructions upon the things contained there, and plead the leadings of Gods Spirit for the same, you will have but bad success. Therefore beware of such things, you confess that an Apostacy came over such.

Col. 1. 8.

Judge now whether this be not of authority to put a stop to such as run bias for Women to have Meetings to look after Church busi-

ness ; knowing that there can be nothing done in the Church of Christ, or by any Member of it, as relating to it, that is not fit or civil for an honest godly Man to do.

Answer to the 2 Query. The Gospel of Christ, which Friends walked according to the Order of many years ago, according to what God then made manifest, is the same that they walk according to the Order of now in their Men and Womens Meetings, as in the power they keep ; and as to Fundamentals, the Church was not so compleat in the knowledge thereof in the beginning, as blessed be the Lord, he hath made many since, yet there was so much as to constitute it a Church, before Womens Meetings, or Mens either, were as they are now : but what tho? doth it therefore follow that they must not be ? Is not the Church before the Government and Discipline of it ? which is for the good and well-being of the same, that so all things may be done and kept in order, and if any disorder be, that it may be took course with, that so the Truth which is clear may be kept clear ? We do not say, that thou or any is to run into, or take up the practice of any thing, because we say it, until they are fully perswaded in their own minds, as that good Man said ; but we do say, if any directly discountenance such things, and resist Admonition, and persist in the work of Division, we cannot

cannot but look upon them therein not in the unity with the Church of Christ, and Order of the Gospel: for although the Apostle was very tender of such as were weak in the Faith, who thought they might eat nothing but herbs; yet when such as were Teachers of others, or would take upon themselves to be so, and tell People they must abstain from meats, which God had created to be received with thanksgiving, the same Apostle judged such as Preachers of the Doctrine of Devils, and such laid stumbling-blocks in his Brothers way. And such as do keep to the Doctrines and Practices which was first amongst us, and continue in the unity of the Spirit which first united us, (for it was that which first united us) such ought not, nor are by us accounted makers of division, nor judged out of unity with the Church of Christ, and Order of the Gospel.

Christ Jesus the Light, and the Way to the Father and Perfection, who alone can cleanse from all Sin, was preached up, and all necessary helps tending thereto, to the compleating of a holy and upright Life; and now of late for you to set up such things as these, as are no way in themselves necessary to the accomplishing of the other aforesaid; for if they were to be obtained, as no doubt they were, before Womens Meetings were set up to look after the outward Affairs of the Church, as you say; (for I am not against them or any other to meet to pray, exhort, strengthen, and build up one another in their most holy Faith, but yet why Women should be singular in that, except upon particular occasions, is a Paradox to me,) then these Meetings as intended, are either needless; or else many, for all such preaching and praying, rather go back, and so stand in need of such outward helps now, as were not needful then, or at least was not by the Light seen useful in those parts. And then where is the Errour? for as to Fundamentals and Constitution you grant the Church was compleat before such Meetings, then it must needs follow, that it is not your Knowledge in, or Ignorance of, that can add to or detract from her; for *William Pen* says, *That a Society going from, or adding to what it was when truly called a Church, was that which only did unchurch it, and not its continuing as it was.* And Christ Jesus he that was before all things, the Government is to be upon his shoulders, and the Church is to be subject to him, *Eph. 5. 24.* And the blessed Apostles preached and writ to Believers otherwise than.

Reply.

Ija. 9. 6.

2 Cor. I. 24.

Acts 20. 32.

Rom. 14. 5.

than this of yours, for that Conscience which the Lord hath made tender, should not be imposed to receive or reject as Men please, but according as the Lord makes manifest, for they said they had not dominion over others Faith, neither were they *Lords over Gods Heritage*, 1 Pet. 5. 3. but left every one to Gods witness, and to the Word of his Grace which was nigh in the Heart, and that was it which was able to build up; and furthermore said they, *let every one be fully perswaded in his own mind*, and said, *if in any thing they were otherwise minded, God would reveal it to them*, Phil. 3. 15. and waited in patience to see the Work of God to prosper. But you say to Believers, that if any by word or deed directly discountenance Womens Meetings, so set up by you as afore, they are makers of division, and so excommunicate them; read your selves by the Apostles, who never writ or spoke after that manner to Believers. Your bringing that of *Paul* to *Timothy* is very impertinent to that of *Rom. 14.* for I told you there *Paul* was exhorting Believers, and speaking of Believers duty one towards another; and in 1 Tim. 4. he gives *Timothy* a foresight of the Apostacy, and what Teachers should arise in the last times, and Signs to know them, which is nothing to the matter in hand. And there was no such Doctrine and Practice of Womens Meetings, as now set up here, separate and apart by themselves, to take care of the Churches business amongst us at first, or 18 or 20 years ago, but now of late. And yet you say, such as do keep to the Doctrines and Practices as was first amongst us, &c. Are not you here in judging and condemning your selves at the same time when you would so justify your selves, but see it not? Indeed I mourn over you, and pray that the Lord may take away the vail from before your eyes, that you may see that it was bringing in of new & strang Doctrines & Practices that always disturbed the Church, and made Divisions, and broke the Unity; and not such who believe and continue in that blessed *Light*, Christ Jesus, which alone leads and preserves, as obedience is yielded to him, out of all darkness; so that it is strange that those that continue in that antient Truth should now be accounted makers of division.

Rom. 16. 17.

Answer 10
the 3 Query.

The Unity of the Church stood and stands in that which was before the World was, or before Man and Woman was; and in this stands our Unity in our Men and Womens Meetings, as in the power we keep. It was not the way of the holy Ancients to im.

impose things upon Believers, neither do we; but there were some in those days that were puffed up, which did oppose and gainsay both them and the power they were in, and such they judged, and so do we. It is not the way of the Lord to restrain any from speaking or writing any thing that may be upon their Spirits from Himself, or in tenderness for satisfaction, which have no other design than to take up and lay down such things as they may have the answer from the Lord, that he is well pleased with them therein; neither do we, the Lord forbid. But it is the way of the Lord, and the practice of his Servants to testify against such as would breed * Divisions, and would draw after self into Parties, and yet pretend fair; as many did in the Apostles time, and many have in our days, and against such the Spirit and Power of the Lord is, &c.

* It is a true Maxim *in causa* way the Cause, and the Effects will cease. You have introduced

a Cause from whence Effects flow, the Effects this Cause produces you would have to be a principal Cause of it self, this is not true Philosophy; for where there is no cause for such a thing, no such thing from such a thing can be educed; but time was there were no such Womens Meetings set up here on this wise, under such Limitations and Censures, therefore then no cause for such questioning or thus writing. I affect plainness.

If you had continued in that where true Unity was, you would not have innovated such things as would have broke it, or infested the * Church and disturbed her peace, and that practice in which she was at first settled, with such unheard of Novelties, and that upon such Censures. And for you to fasten Division upon me, who am very careful and circumspect that I may give no just occasion to you or any, but my daily Prayer is that I may walk in the Light of the Lord, which leads to Holiness. But it hath been too much the Practice of some to fasten bad Names upon such they have a Prejudice against, that thereby they might make them odious, and for others to be ware of; but this will not do against him or them whose harmless Life and Conversation outstrips such Epithites. And that I may make things clear to all rational understanding Men in these matters, see whether those Acts 15. which were bringers in of Circumcision among Believers, under such Censures that except they were circumcised they could not be saved, run not parallel with your setting up Womens Meetings; for say you, if any by word or deed directly discountenance them, we look upon such therein makers of division, and out of unity with the Church of Christ, and Order of the Gospel,

Reply.

* For this your Paper is general.

* What needs this, for if these things were done, as you say, in the Leadings and Orderings of Gods Spirit, he alone is able to support and defend that which he leads to, and so you should have left it.

Gal. 4. 16.

* Gospel; these by the Apostles were counted Disturbers, Troublers of the Churches Peace, and Makers of Division, and which most of you at first were against, and unsatisfied in; and it had been prudence in you, seeing this thing sprung not in (& from) you, to have forbore your hands pressing things at this rate; for we having declared and proved by Scripture and sound Reason, that Christ Jesus is the true Light which lighteth every Man coming into the World, as Men owning Principles; but now for you to assert such things as afore, which the Scripture no where mentions, you cannot thereby convince the Gainayers, and for you to plead Divine Inspiration in this thing, that you cannot do; so that I cannot be silent, but shew you your Error herein, and not as one unacquainted with the Dealings of God, and desire that the everlasting Truth may reign over all, but in my judgment this is not the way to advance it to contend thus.

Answer to the 4 Query.

* Where Division is, something there must be which is the Cause of it; for where there is no Cause for Division, no Division from such a Cause can flow; but you hereby make it apparent that I should take all for truth you say and do, and not question or discountenance the same, and this is your way here prescribed to preserve and keep in unity with you.

They that bring in and set up that in the Church, which is acceptable in the sight of God and good Men, and persuade and admonish others not directly by word or deed to discountenance the same, and so persist in the work of * Division, are doing as they would be done by, and this is the way to preserve and keep in unity. We say all have a measure of Gods good Spirit given unto them, by which all ought to be guided, and that would shew them what to do, and what to leave undone: but it doth not follow that all are guided by it, and so see what they ought to do, and what to leave undone; or if by the same they see what to do, and what to leave undone, in some things it is too apparent they are not obedient thereunto; it is now the measure of Gods Spirit that is to direct what to do, and what to leave undone. In the former Queries it must be one Instance from Scripture, or Ground from thence for what we do, this seemeth somewhat like *Babels* Builders, and such are contentious and makers of Division, and by such as before mentioned was the first Occasion of Offence given, and there was the first breach of Unity.

Barnshaw, 14th of the
6th Month, 1676.

From thy real Friend
and Well-wisher,

Alexander Lawrence.

This

This Answer shews more dexterity in you to be censorious, than of candour to your Friend; so that this, with your carriage as in the first part, being not so careful and faithful to perform accordingly, doth not satisfy me, nay nor will yield true satisfaction to any of a doubtful mind herein. I will not say what Familiarity or the affectionate Part may do, but still you would be Judges; and it cannot be expected, that I should have walked with you so long and be ignorant of these things, that in plainness who ever bows not to this set up, but questions your Authority now in these matters, and tells you the Truth, you instead of backing the same by those Divine and Heavenly Writings, pass sentence, yea you have past it already, that such are makers of Division; but these are no convincing Arguments as all Men of a sober Judgment well know, so that what you should resolve and answer plainly to, you overlook it. I know that the good Spirit of God which leads into all Truth is manifested; but now it lyeth on your part to *prove, that Females were ever intrusted to look after the Government of the Church (for so it lieth on your part, or else to have forborn to have writ on this wife) that Women had Meetings separate and apart by themselves on purpose, as they have now here once a Month, and once a Quarter, as Men in the first part, to look after, as you say, the Churches business: for though I grant, those that have received a measure of Gods Spirit, may as it moves, prophesie, or speak for Instruction and Edification, and the like, according to their several Gifts; yet every Member hath not the same office, for as there are diversities of Gifts, so differences of Administration of those Gifts, and diversities of Operations in and by those Gifts, 1 Cor. 12. 4, 5, 6, 28. Having then different Gifts, every one was and is to wait in their proper Gift, Rom. 12. 4, to 9. For hitherto having the same ground for our Practice which the holy Scriptures bear witness of, and to, and which those holy Men were exercised in, am bold to affirm it leads all that obey to own the Scriptures as afore; and the Reason of my true Obedience is not meerly because they are there written, but because they are the eternal Precepts of the Spirit in my Conscience, there repeated and declared; therefore finding those holy Men kept nothing back of the Counsel of God manifested to them in that Age, of which we all confess they were indued with a more clear discerning than I hope any of

* Though I
writ this to
them more
than four
months ago,
they have not
returned me
any Answer to
prove it.

Acts 20. 27,
28. to 34.

us will acknowledg to have received in this Age, of what might make for the Churches good, peace, and welfare; so that you having brought in that which they made no mention of, yet left sufficient upon record, as to the matter, manner, and who were fit to look after such things. Likewise misunderstanding your selves, draw a false Conclusion; because I question what Example or Command you have from Scripture to set up Womens Meetings thus, and call them Gospel-Order; and in another place, whether others have not a measure of Gods Spirit to direct them what to do, and what to leave undone as well as you? Say you of me, *It is now the measure of God's Spirit that is to direct what to do, and what to leave undone; and in thy former Queries it must be one Instance from Scripture, or Ground from thence for what we do: this (say you) seems somewhat like Babel's Builders, and such are contentious and makers of Division.* To which I reply, the holy Scriptures are at unity with that blessed Spirit that gave them forth; and this is the first time I ever heard they should so far differ from that Spirit that gave them forth, as to be compared to Babel's Builders; and such as walk answerable to his requirings, to the witnessing of them fulfilled, to be esteemed contentious and Makers of Division. And it is as impossible for you to separate such from Christ Jesus who is their life, as it is for you to stop the Sun in its Course; only you have herein now more manifested your selves than formerly. And here I leave my Cause with the Lord, and could desire that my Breast was as a Window for every one to see into and through, and not as one seeming to be what I am not.

I remain with my true Love
to you in Christ Jesus,

Richard Smith.

Catechism;
pag. 8.

Hear farther what Robert Barclay says. *If thou lovest the Scripture indeed, and desirest to hold the plain Doctrines therein delivered, and not the strained, and far fetched Consequences which Men have invented thou shalt easily observe the [Whole Principles] of the People called Quakers, plainly couched in Scripture words, without Addition or Commentary. This Peoples Principles are found in Scripture, word by word.*

My

My Expostulation with all Sorts of Professours, is not to prove some one or two Points by the Scripture, but the Whole Body of our Principles.

173.

And now Reader, thou seest what some would make a cogent obliging Principle amongst us, that not to own it as so, (but give both Scripture, Reason, and our own Writings, to prove that such a Principle was not amongst us at the beginning, when we called our selves the Church of Christ;) whether such have given any just occasion; or rather those who press (and that in the Name of the Lord) such unheard of Novelties on this wise? The Lord, if it be his will, open the eyes of all that had a hand in it, to see their Mistake.

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are Rev. 3. 23. ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.

Indeed I lament to see things thus, that all Travel and Sufferings for Righteousness sake to be so little esteemed and set by, with such a People who have declared and likewise writ more for freedom in religious matters than most People, should now after so long a time set up such things under such Limitations and Censures, that those who have so travelled and suffered, now for speaking and writing their minds freely concerning such matters, without singularity, or design but Truth, should for so doing in their account forfeit all, and by them judged makers of division, and out of unity with the Church of Christ and Order of the Gospel. To such I say from a good understanding, that except you repent of these things, and for the future leave of this your censuring and judging others, who walk as holy and unblameable in the Light of the Lord, and are as careful to serve the Lord and to answer his Requirings as yourselves; you cannot avoid, but fall under the Judgment of them which you are separated from; and whoever hath or doth profess the Truth, and walks not up to it will not by accordingly, shall and must bear their own burthen, and the Truth which is Truth, and there is not another, shall be clear.

The Spirit of God which works as it pleases by means, yet will not by any be tied to means; the Lord will be free, so should his People be. The contrary is, was, and ever will be the Cause of Division.

A few words to them that are tender, and seek nothing of this World, but are journeying towards that Life which never shall have end, and who oft have been, and yet may be, beset with trials and deep exercises in your Pilgrimage, such as you never expected to meet withal; so that you may be ready to say within

your selves, Have I forsaken all that is near and dear to me in this world to embrace the Truth; expecting I should never have found those professing the same, and such as were convinced before me, and have been deeply engaged several ways upon Truths account, thus to differ among themselves? for some to set up such things amongst us, and that on this wise, and which were not amongst us heretofore; this is the cause of both questioning and sorrow of heart. I can truly say with thee, these things grieve me; but the enemy will come on thee with fresh and new assaults to draw thee to side with, and justify this or that Man, and condemn the other, and to take part with this thing (because such and such and many own it, and thou art not, nor can be content or satisfied in thy self except thou hast the Countenance of such) though thou knowest not the thing in it self; neither hast thou any just occasion against such who speak and write their minds freely herein; so that sometimes thou wilt be as bewildred in thy mind, and oft at a stand, and it's not to say what disquietness will arise by reason hereof.

To you do I say from a sensible feeling of God's eternal Love, having travelled through many straits; keep on in thy way Heavenward, and abide in the Improvement of that Talent committed to thee, and meddle not with others matters, or wish things above thy reach, and let none draw thee to give judgment with them in such things, and look upon none more than what they are in the Lord, lest thou be drawn to affect the earthen Vessel more than the treasure manifested through it; and shut out all that would interrupt thy Communion with God; and keep in love and tenderness towards all that have a love to God, and that have no end or regard to self, or to this World, nor the things of it, above what they are, but unto Purity, and Holiness, and a close walking with God in Spirit, and all Temptations will vanish, and thou wilt feel the Arm and Power of the Lord to bring thee through this Wilderness, and will lead thee into the Land of Rest and Peace, where thou shalt lye down safely, and none shall make thee afraid.

I am likewise grieved for the Sons and Daughters of Men, who delight in lyeing, and other sinful Pleasures and Vanities, which presses them down, and keeps their souls in darkness. Ah! that Men would return to the Lord, that they by him and through him might witness a true cleansing from all their Sins and Uncleannesse.

1 Cor. 6. 9. *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God; be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.*

Rev. 21. 7, 8. *He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my Son; but the Fearful, and Unbelieving, and the Abominable, and Murderers, and Whoremongers, and Sorcerers, and Idolaters, and all Liars, shall have their part in the Lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*

Isaiah 55. 7. *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous Man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

The END.